

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Economic Development/Public Services Committee (ED/PS) was charged with the review and investigation of the operations and functions of the following departments:

- Agriculture/Weights & Measures
- Airports
- Economic and Community Development
- Economic Development/Public Services Group Administration
- Fire Department/Office of Emergency Services
- Jobs and Employment Services
- Land Use Services
- Library
- Museum
- Public Works
- Redevelopment Agency
- Registrar of Voters
- Special Districts

Due to the limitation of time and the fact that three of the 13 ED/PS departments had been extensively reviewed last year, only ten of the 13 ED/PS departments were reviewed this year.

The departments that were not reviewed this year were:

- Agriculture/Weights & Measures
- Land Use Services
- Economic Development/Public Services Group

After the interviews and investigations, it was determined that no findings and recommendations would be made on Airports, Economic & Community Development Department, Library, Public Works Department, Redevelopment Agency and Special Districts.

Background, findings and recommendations are being presented on the following departments.

COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

BACKGROUND

"The mission of the San Bernardino County Fire Department is to provide a community based all-risk emergency services organization dedicated to the health and well being of the citizens of San Bernardino County through a balance of regionalized services delivery and accountability to the local community."

The centralized management of the County Fire Department oversees the budget concerns of 32 separate budget units that: (a) make up a proposed FY 2001/2002 budget of \$56.2 million; (b) employs a staff of nearly 400 permanent employees, including 218 safety personnel and over 500 paid call firefighters and other non permanent staff. The County Fire Department is unique in that it provides management services for the Board-governed fire districts and County Services Areas (CSA), while they maintain their separate legal status. The varying levels of tax funding in each community determine the level of emergency services that can be provided.

All-risk emergency services are provided to 64 communities/cities as well as the sparsely populated areas within the department's 16,255 square miles of protection responsibility.

The term "all-risk" is used because the department is responsible not only for traditional fire suppression duties, but also for: (a) emergency medical services; (b) ambulance transportation; (c) hazardous materials response/mitigation; (d) specialized technical rescue; (e) disaster preparedness; (f) fire prevention; and (g) code enforcement duties. Many County Fire stations serve as the citizens' first link with County government and the Board of Supervisors.

FINDINGS

Members of the Grand Jury met with County Fire Department officials and visited facilities, including the training facility located at the San Bernardino International Airport.

The County Fire Chief/Warden and his administrative staff have created a course of study for training of potential firefighters. There is now a module located on the Fire Department's training grounds specifically for classroom training. County Fire personnel man and operate the module.

Students are given hands-on instruction in all types of fire extinguishing apparatus and the types of fires that have a potential for causing great bodily harm, or death, if the students are improperly trained.

The training facility incorporates a series of underground tunnels and obstacles as well as rooms that a firefighter must learn to maneuver in and out of during an emergency. There is a system that must be mastered, which provides for the safe removal of an injured party. The training programs are practiced repeatedly in an effort to give the trainees the maximum amount of self-confidence.

The San Bernardino Regional Emergency Training Center, a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) between San Bernardino County Fire, San Bernardino City Fire and the San Bernardino Community College District, intends to build a \$7.5 million Federal Aviation Administration funded Crash Fire Training center. The facility will provide training needs for the western United States. The JPA will run the facility.

Projected expenditures, together with the growing population within the Inland Empire, have brought upon County Fire administration the need to modify their philosophy in providing for the needs of the general population. The County Fire Department is proceeding with improvements to the training facility.

All of the management staff at County Fire insists that their employees strictly adhere to the two-man concept (two men in and two men out) in firefighting strategies. The firefighters currently have in their inventory different types of breathing apparatus. Critical time is lost if the firefighters' breathing apparatus is not completely fitted against the face until they enter a fire and smoke filled room. Should the firefighter not adjust the mask properly it could cost the person being rescued their life because the firefighter could become one of the people in need of rescuing.

Firefighters have contained in their equipment a communications device. If one firefighter should be separated or impaired, his second team member can communicate with others for assistance.

San Bernardino County standards basically reflect the national standards for replacement of fire equipment:

Engines	10-15 years
Ladder Trucks	15-20 years
Wild Land Apparatus	20 years

The County currently contributes from the General Fund: (1) \$500,000 annual basic services to unfunded County areas, of which \$270,000 is for replacement of fire apparatus, extrication tools, and other related heavy life-saving equipment for those stations providing services to the unfunded areas; (2) \$200,000 reimbursement of actual

cost to provide service to those district's providing service outside of their legal boundary on a regular ongoing basis.

County Fire covers 90 percent of the National Forest land in the County, provides all-risk services to these lands, and receives no direct allocation of the payment in lieu of taxes.

There are radioactive and transuranic waste routes through the County of San Bernardino to a facility in New Mexico. The transported material consists of nuclear fuel (high and low level), mixed waste and transuranic waste. Transportation of this waste is categorized as safe from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Panel of the National Academy of Sciences.

The transportation routes have been identified as Highways 15, 40, 58 and 127 at this time. It is expected that additional routes will be authorized in the future. Responding to any type of accident occurring on any route will be from the County's paid call firefighters to provide emergency medical rescue, fire fighting and abatement of hazardous materials.

Radioactive shipments are transported through the northern portion of the County. Other shipments of higher-level wastes will traverse the entire County. The training plan for San Bernardino County to address the responses to the radioactive shipments in the North Desert is in full swing. The training plan will be expanded in the next two years to include all areas of the County. The plan consists of several operational categories as follows:

- Public information officers
- Trainer training – fire/rescue first responders
- Emergency medical personnel
- County hazardous materials response teams and incident commanders
- Receiving hospitals
- Tabletop exercises, as well as live action real-time drills

As of this time, none of this training is being funded by State or Federal government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

02-20 ALL SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS USED BY COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL MUST BE OF THE SAME DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE.

- 02-21 ALLOCATE FUNDS TO THE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF BREATHING APPARATUS WITH COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.
- 02-22 INCREASE FUNDING LEVELS FOR THE FOLLOWING EMERGENCY SERVICE ITEMS: (A) BASIC SERVICES TO THE NON-FUNDED AREAS; (B) COUNTY SERVICE AREAS PROVIDING SERVICE OUTSIDE OF THEIR LEGAL BOUNDARY ON A REGULAR BASIS; (C) REPLACEMENT OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT.
- 02-23 CREATE A CONTRIBUTION ACCOUNT TO BE EARMARKED FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF FIREFIGHTER EQUIPMENT.
- 02-24 ALL COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS RECEIVE NECESSARY TRAINING IN HANDLING AN INCIDENT INVOLVING RADIOACTIVE WASTE.

JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

BACKGROUND

The Jobs and Employment Services Department (JESD) of San Bernardino County is part of the Economic Development and Public Services Group (ED-PSG). JESD promotes the economic enrichment of our county by developing a qualified workforce to place with San Bernardino County employers.

JESD was established in 1991. Two programs that predated JESD, GAIN (Greater Avenues to Independence) and JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act), focused on finding employment for those on public assistance. JESD's services were available to all job seekers and all local employers.

Currently, according to JESD, it has approximately 800 staff at 30 locations across the County.

In 1997 the State of California passed AB 1542 which created a program called CalWORKS. JESD administers the CalWORKS program in San Bernardino County and provides a comprehensive welfare-to-work program and has a time limit for individuals receiving public assistance.

JESD's mandate is to provide a network of activities and services. JESD assists CalWORKS participants and others to achieve self-sufficiency, thus improving the quality of life for that individual and the economy.

JESD reported that between July 2000 and June 2001, it successfully placed 17,700 clients.

FINDINGS

Jobs and Employment Services:

- offers excellent job entry and job search skills
- networks with employers and other training programs
- clients tend to come to it with low job entry skills. These limitations have hampered their ability to successfully enter the job market on their own.

- has resources for those in special need of strengthening their job search skills and those seeking to enter the job market.
- staff is skilled in working with the clients utilizing their services.

Presently, a uniform method is not being used at each of the 30 JESD sites for documenting its networking with the employment community, schools, continuation schools, community colleges and unions.

There is an uneven publicizing of their successes by the 30 JESD sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 02-25 IMPLEMENT A PROCESS IN JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR DOCUMENTING ITS' NETWORKING WITH THE EMPLOYMENT COMMUNITY, HIGH SCHOOLS, CONTINUATION SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND UNIONS.
- 02-26 JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PUBLICIZE ITS SUCCESSES THROUGH THE MEDIA AND THROUGH CONTACTS WITH SERVICE CLUBS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

MUSEUM

BACKGROUND

In July 2000 the County Museum became a stand-alone County department. Originally it was a division of the Community and Cultural Resources Department, which was eliminated in July 2000.

FINDINGS

The County Museum has endeavored for excellence in meeting the demands of the County's residents by seeking exhibits that would add to the culture of the residents of San Bernardino County.

The programs in existence, and scheduled for the future have, and will continue to prove themselves beneficial to the patrons and local schools who visit this County facility.

The research department benefits individuals in both the public and private sector from around the world.

The County's Archives Section of the Museum has stored within it a multitude of documents ranging from maps of the area to written documents dating back to when the Inland Empire was first settled.

The Museum also fulfills the Federal government's need as a depository in which artifacts recovered on Federal lands are stored.

Located just inside the main entrance is the Museum Store that contains books, gifts and other related objects associated with the exhibits that are currently on display. The store maintains a full selection of local history and natural history books, toys and games for learning, science equipment and books for teachers, students and children, and unique merchandise to recall visits to a special place.

There was a reported shortage of money detected by Museum personnel. An audit confirmed the total shortages to be \$31,809 from the gift store and \$2,204 from admissions. The Museum's administration reported the discrepancies to the appropriate County departments. The investigation conducted by the County Sheriff's Department yielded no indictments. Reimbursements were sought and obtained from the County's Risk Management Department.

A new security and accountability matrix has been installed to combat possible misappropriation of Museum property and to fulfill the needs of the recent San Bernardino County Auditor/Controller-Recorder's audit.

The Museum's administration reviews the policies of the department's operations manual monthly. It makes changes to that document, which would enhance the performance of this facility and contribute to the operation and business needs of the Museum.

There is no fire suppression system in the stored document areas of the County Museum.

There is no retrieval system for documents stored in the Archive storage area. By removing the original document from its secured container, the document is being subjected to deterioration and other hazards.

The Museum administration has not communicated with the County Fire Chief/Warden to seek a resolution to have installed a Halon gas fire suppression system. A Halon system would extinguish a fire without destroying the contents of the document storage areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 02-27 ENFORCE ALL MONETARY ACCOUNTABILITY PROCEDURES IN ADMISSIONS AND IN THE MUSEUM STORE.
- 02-28 REVIEW ALL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR THE MUSEUM ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.
- 02-29 INSTALL A COMPUTER RETRIEVAL SYSTEM TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY IN PROVIDING DOCUMENTS TO RESEARCHERS.
- 02-30 COMMUNICATE WITH MUSEUMS AND OTHER SOURCES TO BRING EXHIBITS TO SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY.
- 02-31 MEET WITH THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE CHIEF/WARDEN TO SEEK RESOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF INADEQUATE FIRE PROTECTION OF THE DOCUMENT STORAGE AREA.

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

BACKGROUND

The County Registrar of Voters (ROV) mission is to provide voting opportunities to all eligible citizens by conducting Federal, State and local elections.

San Bernardino County is the largest election jurisdiction in the Continental United States and the fifth largest California County in terms of registered voters.

FINDINGS

On Election Day, November 6, 2001, County Registrar of Voters computer programming flaws resulted in incorrect counts in 13 elections. That required the overturning of those 13 elections.

The program error was corrected and an accurate count was made. The Registrar of Voters office has, to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, established checks to verify appropriate computer programming.

The redrawing of voter districts compounded the Registrar of Voters job. In November 2001, 125 ballot versions had to be produced for County voters. The March 2002 election required 1,160 ballot versions.

As a result of redistricting, the number of ballot versions increased to 145, leading to frustration by voters and poll workers. A total of 2,636 poll workers were required for the March 5, 2002 election. A large number of these poll workers left their stations in frustration. The Registrar's office effectively responded to that crisis and found replacements.

With the excellent cooperation of key high school personnel, between 500 to 600 high school students have participated each year as poll workers, and more are needed. The recruitment and training of high school students as poll workers is of major assistance to the Registrar of Voters.

Under present circumstances, the Registrar noted the department's quarters are inadequate. Additional funds are currently needed for renovating the central headquarters, especially for an absentee voter section. On Election Day the ROV warehouse must be used and they are still short of space.

Salaries of top Registrar of Voters personnel are at least \$10,000 below the salaries of their counterparts in comparable counties.

The County Registrar expressed her impression that her office had not received the necessary support to enable the office to function at a quality level. She resigned in March 2002.

Three of the reasons given by the Registrar of Voters for her resignation were (1) lack of support from the Board of Supervisors; (2) failure to staff the Registrar's office at an adequate level; and (3) the County did not offer competitive salaries for key ROV staff members.

The Registrar of Voters notes that its website (www.sbcrov.com) contains extensive information on election laws and other information relevant to 2002 elections.

By 2004 punch card voting will be required to be eliminated and touch screen voting instituted as the sole option. Many Registrars have maintained that it can be done, but not by 2004, without major problems, including tamper proofing that system. The Registrar of Voters noted that (a) touch screening can be done, but not without additional equipment; and (b) in that system, tamper proof hard copies can be produced only after the polls close.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 02-32 INCREASE TRAINING CLASSES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND OTHER POLL WORKERS.
- 02-33 FUND THE RENOVATIONS AT THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS FACILITIES.
- 02-34 PUBLICIZE THE COUNTY WEBSITE AND THE ELECTION INFORMATION.
- 02-35 THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS INFORM THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON WHAT WOULD BE REQUIRED TO INSTALL AND IMPLEMENT TAMPER PROOF TOUCH SCREEN VOTING.